AMENDMENT OF CLAIMS

(Claim 1, amended)

1. A method of creating a personalized user profile implemented on a computer for searching a database comprising:

(a) displaying to the user an index of choices representing content items stored in the database, wherein each choice of the index is associated with a set of related keywords representing categories for the content items stored in the database;

(b) establishing a personal profile for the user comprising a Personal Word Map of keywords compiled from selections made by the user from the displayed index and from those entered as user input on the computer;

(c) receiving a first user input of a selection of a choice from the displayed index, and retrieving the associated keywords related to the selected choice, and selecting one or more pairs of different keywords as Boolean operators in order to generate a corresponding set of one or more search phrases using the associated keywords;

(d) conducting a search of the database using the set of search phrases as search queries to the database, and returning one or more objects from the database in response to the search queries;

(e) displaying to the user a new index of choices representing the objects returned from the database, wherein each choice on the displayed index is associated with the pair of keywords used as Boolean operators in the search phrase that returned the object represented;

(f) receiving a subsequent user input of a selection of a choice from the displayed index, and updating the Personal Word Map of the user's personal profile with the pair of keywords used in the search phrase that returned the selected object,

wherein said Personal Word Map is comprised of separate line entries for each different keyword used in a search phrase followed by its associated keyword, and each keyword in the Personalized Word Map is tracked with a weight value for the number of times that keyword has been used in search phrases that returned objects selected by the user;

(g) retrieving associated keywords related to each of the pair of keywords used in the search phrase that returned the selected object, and selecting one or more pairs of different keywords from the associated keywords as Boolean operators in order to generate a subsequent set of search phrases using the associated keywords;

(h) conducting a subsequent search of the database using the subsequent set of search phrases as further search queries to the database, and returning one or more objects from the database in response to the search queries;

(i) displaying to the user a new index of choices representing the objects returned from the database, wherein each choice on the displayed index is associated with the pair of keywords used in the search phrase that returned the object represented; and

(j) for each user selection of a choice from the displayed index, updating the Personal Word Map of the user's personal profile by entering each keyword of each pair of keywords for a user selection as a separate line entry if it is not already listed as a separate line entry, or if it is already listed as a separate line entry then incrementing the weight value of the listed keyword by one, and also entering its associated keyword as a following entry if it is not already listed as a following entry, and if the associated keyword is already listed as a following entry then incrementing its weight value by one;

whereby, by iteratively continuing the cycle of user input by selection from the displayed index of choices, updating the user's personal profile with keywords used in the search phrase that returned the object selected by the user, using associated keywords related to the selected keywords to generate a subsequent set of search phrases, and conducting a further search of the database with the subsequent set of search phrases, ~~thereby enhancing~~ the depth of the personal profile is continuously refined by user selections over time adding to the weight value of keywords and those associated therewith for objects selected by the user and allowing it to be used to uniquely characterize the particular interests of the user in computerized applications that are to be personalized to the user.

(Claim 2, original)

2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the method is implemented on a computer connected to a network, and the network is a repository of a large or distributed database of information.

(Claim 3, original)

3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the network is the World Wide Web having multitude of websites storing a distributed database of information, and the user uses a standard browser as an interface on the computer to the World Wide Web.

(Claim 4, cancelled)

(Claim 5, amended)

5. A method according to Claim 3, wherein to initiate a session by the user to visit a website on the World Wide Web, a Site Navigation Map containing choices of objects representing categories of content items stored on the website is displayed as an initial index to the user.

(Claim 6, original)

6. A method according to Claim 5, wherein the Site Navigation Map is included in a Site Word Map containing lists of default keywords associated with each choice displayed to the user.

(Claim 7, original)

7. A method according to Claim [4] 1, wherein to initiate a session on the computer by the user, a previous Personalized Word Map stored on the computer is retrieved, or, if there is no stored personal word map, a default (initial) word map is retrieved.

(Claims 8-10, cancelled)

(Claim 11, original)

11. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising prior to displaying a new index of objects returned from search queries to the database, the step of selecting and filtering objects to be included in the display according to pre-determined parameters.

(Claim 12, original)

12. A method according to Claim 11, further comprising the step of publishing and influencing the selection of objects to be presented in the display according to predetermined parameters.

(Claim 13, original)

13. A method according to Claim 12, wherein the step of influencing the selection of objects to be presented in the display includes selecting those objects whose search phrases include a keyword that matches a keyword already listed on the Personalized Word Map.

(Claim 14, original)

14. A method according to Claim 5, wherein the personal profile for the user is used to identify the user's preferences for items of interest on a website visited by the user.

(Claim 15, original)

15. A method according to Claim 14, wherein the personal profile for the user is used at the transaction layer of a website.

(Claim 16, original)

16. A method according to Claim 14, wherein the personal profile for the user is used to display items retrieved from the database of the website that match the preferences of the user.

(Claim 17, original)

17. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the personal profile for the user is used for a database application involving one of the group consisting of: Cultural Pattern Recognition; Geographic Trend Analysis; Demographic Visualization; Behavioral Characterization of Markets; and Language and Culture Migration.

(Claim 18, cancelled)